

VZCZCXRO9464
PP RUEHBC RUEHDA RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHAM #3871/01 2601552
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 171552Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0341
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 003871

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA AND PRM

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [SOCI](#) [EAID](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: IRAQIS IN JORDAN ENROLLING AT A MODERATE PACE;
FOCUS SHIFTING TO HEALTH NEEDS

REF: A. AMMAN 3754
[1](#)B. AMMAN 3545

[1](#)1. (U) SUMMARY: Iraqi enrollment in Jordanian schools reached 21,000 as of September 15, with the GOJ agreeing to extend enrollment through September 30. No consensus has emerged to fully explain the low enrollment totals. UN agencies and NGOs are actively engaged in a last-ditch effort to clarify any misunderstandings so as to encourage enrollment. Meanwhile the UN and the GOJ are beginning to shift focus towards addressing challenges facing the health sector. UNHCR and the Ministry of Planning intend to amend their \$10 million agreement on education assistance (ref b), while USAID and UNICEF conduct a qualitative survey to inform relief efforts. END SUMMARY.

EDUCATION -----

[1](#)2. (U) Following what was to have been the final day of school registration for Iraqis on September 15, the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MoE) reported that 21,000 Iraqi students had enrolled in Jordanian public schools, representing an increase of 7,000 over last year's registrants. At the request of UNHCR, the MoE agreed to extend the registration period until September 30. Local and regional press carried news of the decision on September 14 and 15. Meanwhile, UNHCR, UNICEF, and NGOs received MoE and Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) permission to conduct a last-ditch public information campaign directed at Iraqis registered with UNHCR and other Iraqi recipients of NGO services in Jordan.

[1](#)3. (U) USAID and contractor CDM have begun visiting schools in East Amman, where an estimated 150 additional classrooms will be constructed with USG funds. Site selection is expected to continue through September. School construction remains on track to begin in January 2008.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Several NGOs have confirmed to poloff the limited numbers of Iraqi student enrollment. Note: Initial estimates of expected enrollment revolved around the figure of 50,000. End note. NGOs claimed to poloff that less Iraqis are enrolled because some schools have reached capacity and are not maintaining waiting lists. Save the Children, for example, identified 20 schools that have no additional capacity. Both Save the Children and Mercy Corps report that the decision to maintain a waiting list as directed by the MoE is being made by school principals. In the absence of waiting lists, schools reportedly suggest that Iraqi registrants approach other schools. Relief International reported that some Iraqi children are also dropping out after discovering that the differences in curriculum make it difficult for Iraqi students to assimilate into the Jordanian

system.

¶5. (SBU) According to minutes of a September 13 meeting between UNHCR, MOPIC, and MOE, the latter has formalized an education task force comprising MOE managing directors and the MOPIC. No UN agency will be a standing member of this body, but MOE reports that UNHCR and UNICEF will be invited to participate as needed.

¶6. (SBU) NGOs continue to report that not all schools have received the Ministry of Education's September 3 letter outlining procedures for enrolling Iraqi students and waiving school and textbook fees. Save the Children told poloff that 6 out of 10 headmasters or headmistresses they called on September 10 had not received the letter. The MOE reportedly told UNICEF and UNHCR representatives that they will handle the issue on a case by case basis.

HEALTH

¶7. (SBU) On September 12, Ambassador Hale met with Salah Al-Mawajdeh, the newly appointed Health Minister, and highlighted the importance of healthcare for displaced Iraqis. Al-Mawajdeh committed to stay actively engaged.

¶8. (U) UNICEF and USAID are in the process of conducting a qualitative survey of the health situation of displaced Iraqis in Jordan over the next 90 days. At present, very little qualitative data is available because patients are not requested to provide details of their nationality when health care is provided. In addition, USAID plans to spend \$2.3 million in facility renovations in East Amman and Zarqa - areas where there are many Iraqi refugees - focusing on safe

AMMAN 00003871 002 OF 002

motherhood and neonatal care facilities.

¶9. (U) UNHCR told emboff on September 16 that UNHCR and MOPIC plan to revise their \$10 million education agreement (ref b) to incorporate a health component whereby UNHCR would provide funds to cover additional staffing, supplies and equipment incurred by the MOH in providing care to Iraqis. The parties are also exploring the feasibility of waiving certain health fees that may limit Iraqi access to facilities and services.

ADMISSIONS

¶10. (SBU) The most recent DHS circuit ride finished on September 13 after the six-member team interviewed almost 200 cases comprising approximately 525 individuals. Based on these interviews, approximately 69 percent were conditionally approved, 19 percent were denied, and 11 percent were either "no decision" or remain pending with DHS for further review. Six percent of the total scheduled caseload did not appear for their interviews. DHS plans to conduct its next circuit ride from October 17 to December 5.

¶11. (SBU) As of September 12, the consular section in Embassy Amman had issued nearly 200 Special Immigrant Visas to qualified Iraqi translators. There were an additional 125 interviews scheduled before the end of the fiscal year in Amman alone.

Hale